

What is Soil ?

DEFINITION: Soil is the material that constitutes the outermost solid layer of the planet. Soil is a naturally occurring mixture of mineral and organic ingredients that interacts with "nature" to sustain life.



The average composition of soil by volume:

- 45% Minerals
- 25% Water
- 25% Air
- 5% Organic matter or humus



Topsoil
Subsoil
Parent Material

Topsoil

The uppermost layer of the soil.

- Major zone of root development
- Carries much of the nutrients to plants
- Supplies a large share of the water used by crops



Subsoil

That part of the soil below the plow depth.

Serves as a support for construction:

- Buildings
- Roads
- Ponds



Parent Material

Unconsolidated organic and mineral material in which soil formation begins.

Mineral material includes:

- Partially weathered rock
- Ash from volcanos
- Sediments moved and deposited by wind and water
- Ground up rock deposited by glaciers



Soil Functions

- As a medium of nutrient exchange
- As an agent to distribute water
- As a support for foundations
- As a filter to protect the quality of water and air

